

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A process for producing an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 100 mPa's, measured as a 5 weight percent solution in toluene and ethanol at a volume ratio of 80 : 20 at 25° C, which process comprises the step of depolymerizing an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 4 to 400 mPa's in the presence of gaseous hydrogen halide to achieve a reduction in viscosity of the ethylcellulose of at least 10 percent.

2. (Original) The process of Claim 1 wherein an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 10 mPa's is produced.

3. (Currently amended) The process of Claim 1 ~~or 2~~ wherein the depolymerization is conducted in the presence of gaseous hydrogen chloride.

4. (Currently amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~ Claim 1 wherein the depolymerization step is conducted in the presence of from 0.5 to 5.0 percent of water, based on the weight of the ethyl cellulose.

5. (Currently amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1 to 4~~ Claim 1 wherein the depolymerization step is conducted in the presence of from 0.1 to 0.5 weight percent of hydrogen chloride, based on the total weight of ethylcellulose to be depolymerized.

6. (Currently amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1 to 5~~ Claim 1 wherein depolymerized ethylcellulose is packaged without a neutralization step after depolymerization.

7. (Currently amended) The process of ~~any one of Claims 1 to 6~~ Claim 1

wherein an ethylcellulose having a viscosity of from 4 to 100 mPa's is depolymerized to an ethylcellulose having a viscosity of from 1 to 2.5 mPa's.

8. (Original) A process for producing an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 100 mPa's, measured as a 5 weight percent solution in toluene and ethanol at a volume ratio of 80 : 20 at 25° C, which process comprises the steps of

a) etherifying alkalized cellulose with ethyl chloride in the presence of an organic solvent to produce an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 4 to 400 mPa's and

b) depolymerizing the produced ethylcellulose in the presence of gaseous hydrogen halide to achieve a reduction in viscosity of the ethylcellulose of at least 10 percent.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Original) An ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 2.5 mPa's, measured as a 5 weight percent solution in toluene and ethanol at a volume ratio of 80 : 20 at 25 C.

11. (Currently amended) The ethylcellulose of Claim ~~7~~ 10 having a viscosity of from 1 to 2.3 mPa's.

12. (Currently amended) The ethylcellulose of Claim 10 ~~7 or Claim 8~~ having an ethoxyl content of from 45 to 52 percent.

13. (Canceled)

14. (New) The process of Claim 2 wherein depolymerized ethylcellulose is packaged without a neutralization step after depolymerization.

15. (New) The process of Claim 8 wherein depolymerized ethylcellulose is packaged without a neutralization step after depolymerization.

16. (New) A method of preparing a tablet coating or a film for controlled drug release comprising the step of applying an ethylcellulose having an ethoxyl content of from 40 to 55 percent and a viscosity of from 1 to 2.5 mPa's, measured as a 5 weight percent solution in toluene and ethanol at a volume ratio of 80 : 20 at 25° C to an oral solid dosage form.